

## Leader's Guide

Warner Press, Inc.

Warner Press and Warner Press logo are trademarks of Warner Press, Inc.

*Overall: Understanding the Epic Christian Story*

Written by A. K. Fuller

Copyright ©2023 Warner Press, Inc.

Cover and layout copyright ©2023 Warner Press, Inc.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Requests for information should be sent to:

Warner Press, Inc.

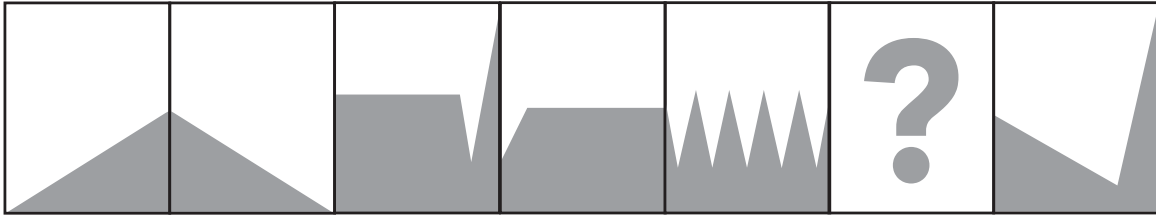
2902 Enterprise Drive

Anderson, IN 46013

[www.warnerpress.org](http://www.warnerpress.org)

Editor: Kevin Stiffler    Cover and Layout: Curtis Corzine





## Leader's Guide

---

The material in *Overall* pulls from seven years of the author's teaching at the church he pastored in Phoenix. Each year he walked through the grand story and focused on a central theme. Some years the church offered a weekly journal for folks to engage with the topic. Other years they did daily readings to supplement the topic. The author also created a three-year discipleship journey that was partially based on this material. It was used by a group of forty to eighty people who met on Sunday nights and dug deeper, covering one Bible story and five to seven questions per week.

There are a couple of ways this book might be used in the context of your church:

- 1) Teach a seven-week series and use the book as supplemental content for discussion groups. This would be a lot of content per week.
- 2) Teach through the whole story in a year and use the book as supplemental content for discussion groups. There are thirty chapters in the book—when you add in breaks for Easter, summer, and Christmas, thirty is about right for a year-long teaching journey.

# Seven-Week Group Plan

---

## Week 1

### Read Part I: One Nation.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? What questions did it raise for you?
- How does your limited knowledge of what happens on the "upper level" of life's drama give you perspective on significant past events in your life—good or bad?
- What parts of God's story are most difficult for you to accept, and why?
- Which "two-by-fours" from the Bible do you find to be most beautiful, and why?
- In what ways are the Ten Commandments still useful for us, even if they were not given directly for us?
- How willing are you to share your weaknesses, mistakes, and blemishes with others? Are you growing and developing through the *Samuel* version of your story, or are you protecting it by pointing fingers at others? Explain.
- On the diagram depicting the seven parts of the Overall story, if moving up on the y-axis means that life is good, how would you label it? What does it mean for life to go well or not to go well? Why do you get up in the morning? Why do you work so hard? Why do you want next year to be better than this year?

## Week 2

### Read Part II: Violation.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? What questions did it raise for you?
- How did your parents' approach to your relationship with them change when you reached adolescence?
- How have you seen division within a group cause the demise of that group or cause it to struggle?
- Share about a time or a situation when you "played close to the edge" and stumbled. What was the end result? What did you learn from the experience?
- Were you "spoiled" by your parents? Did you (or do you) "spoil" your own children? Explain.
- In what other ways do you see the Old Testament demonstrating that full restoration for God's people did not take place?
- In what areas of your life do you (or did you) need restoration from God? What might that (or did that) look like?

## Week 3

### Read Part III: Emmanuel.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? What questions did it raise for you?

- If you have already made an initial life-changing decision about Jesus, describe the circumstances. Upon what did you base your decision?
- Answer the author's question for yourself. If you grew up across the street from a Muslim mosque, would you be Muslim? Why or why not? How did you verify which faith system is true and which ones are less true?
- How has Jesus shown you the destructive power of pride and asked you to humble yourself and break free from it? If life has not yet forced you to be humble, are you willing to choose humility for yourself? Explain.
- How has God demonstrated radical generosity and graciousness to you?
- Are you currently honest about your relationship with Jesus? Do you believe you're allowed to be honest? Has Jesus ever made a promise he didn't seem to keep? Did he promise to be there, but wasn't? Did he promise to provide what you prayed for, but didn't? Have you been honest with him? Explain.
- Which concept of the change Christ has made (or could make) in you resonates most with you? Being fully found? Receiving full, not partial, sight? Enjoying fullness of life? Moving from darkness to light, from grief to joy, or from slave to free? Something else? Complete this sentence: "I no longer need \_\_\_\_ because I now have \_\_\_\_."

## Week 4

### Read Part IV: Revolution.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? What questions did it raise for you?
- How have you been touched by another person's story rather than by the answers that he or she might have had? Why did you find greater value in what that person had witnessed—what he or she had seen and heard?
- Describe the most powerful or unusual display of the Holy Spirit's gifts or power that you have ever seen.
- In what ways has God's invitation to you to be part of his story been subtle?
- In what ways do you feel the way of the cross—including its weakness, brokenness, and shame—looks foolish to the world? How has Jesus provided the world with a new way of thinking through his life and his death?
- What does it mean to you to realize that every hair on your head is known by a King who values you so highly that he gave his life for you? How does the fact that no one is expendable or unworthy in God's eyes cause you to think differently about others?
- How can you shift your spiritual focus from self (dating whomever you want, buying whatever you want, and living wherever you want if you tap into Christ's strength in you) to being part of the revolution—finding contentment by loving others as Christ modeled.

## Week 5

### Read Part V: Anvil.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? What questions did it raise for you?
- How would you attempt to explain the Trinity to someone who is struggling to understand how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three yet one?

- Is it important that Christians “possess” Jerusalem? Is it important that church facilities always be used for the worship of God and never, for example, be sold to a Muslim or Hindu group? Explain.
- How does understanding that Muslims believe in a different Overall story that shapes how they live their lives help you better understand them? How might it influence the way you would speak to Muslims about matters of faith?
- How have you seen issues such as infant baptism, free will, church governance, women in ministry, gifts of the Holy Spirit, and styles of worship divide the church? How might understanding that opposing groups all point to scriptural evidence to support their views impact the way you view such people or dialogue with them?
- Do you tend to feel that science nullifies faith, focuses faith, or fuels faith? Why?
- Is there a difference between church being “fun” and “appealing”? Explain. How can we make sure that church is always “challenging”?

## Week 6

### Read Part VI: Life.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week’s reading? What questions did it raise for you?
- If you had to write your own eulogy, what would it say? What would you want others to say about you? How would you need to live in order to be able to say you had “won the prize” at the end of your life?
- How have you seen the previous episodes of your life influence your behavior or your choices in the current episode?
- Identify the delta moments in your life as the author suggests—points where something significant changed in your mind, your heart, or your soul. As a result of these moments, how did you think differently about God, others, and/or yourself? What are the control factors that have resulted? How might you root these out of your life?
- Looking back on your previous life episodes, how would you rewrite them from God’s perspective? How would God describe the circumstances of your delta moments? How would God describe the control factors you tend to wrestle with? What do you imagine God was thinking, planning, and doing during your previous episodes?
- How can you be more intentional about your thoughts and choices in the “prep” phase of the temptations you face rather than “in the moment” or at the point of response?
- How should understanding church as the place we train on Sunday mornings so we can run the race during the week—instead of as the place we run the race after we have trained during the week—change our approach to church?

## Week 7

### Read Part VII: Last Words.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week’s reading? What questions did it raise for you?
- How can we find a “provocative and relevant spot” in our study of the Book of Revelation between an obsession with “cracking the code” and avoiding this part of the story altogether?

- How does the idea that a relationship with Jesus should move us beyond the “absence of bad” to the “presence of good” affect you? Why?
- Why would anyone respond to the assertion that God will judge us someday by saying, “Maybe—hopefully—I guess we’ll just have to see”?
- What clues does the description of the garden of Eden in Genesis 1–3 give us about the “new heaven and earth” we can expect someday?
- What “glimpses of glory” or “hints of heaven” have you seen in this life that make you excited for heaven?
- What things in life do you need to do before Jesus walks through your front door and says “Time’s up”? What broken relationships need mending? Whom do you need to reach out to, care for, or forgive? What deep desire has God placed in you that you have not yet pursued? What assignment from God has been sitting on your desk for years? What do you need to build, create, write, or start?

## Thirty-Week Group Plan

---

### Week 1

Read Before We Begin, the Part I Intro, and Chapter 1.1: Setting the Stage.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week’s reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week’s reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- Have you ever felt stupid in church? If so, describe the situation. If not, describe some other place where you felt compelled to pretend that you knew what was going on.
- How does your limited knowledge of what happens on the “upper level” of life’s drama give you perspective on significant past events in your life—good or bad?
- How do you reconcile the loving God of the New Testament with the seemingly vengeful God of the Old Testament?

### Week 2

Read Chapter 1.2: Five Hundred Yards.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week’s reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week’s reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- If you have visited the Holy Land, describe the experience. If not, what parts of it would you most like to see?

- Why might some people struggle with the necessity of blood being shed in order to transfer guilt and blame?
- What “two-by-fours” from the Bible story do you struggle with or consider to be “ugly”? Why?

## Week 3

Read Chapter 1.3: Children of God.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week’s reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week’s reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- How have your own children or other children you have known demonstrated that they did not yet have the capacity to give mature love?
- How have you seen the use of boundaries with children prepare them for freedom later on?
- How do you respond to the author’s view that the Ten Commandments were not written for you? Why?

## Week 4

Read Chapter 1.4: You Are That Person.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week’s reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week’s reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- Why do you think the ancient Israelites did not “learn their lesson” when they would forget about God and suffer oppression from neighboring nations?
- Describe someone who has served as a “Nathan” in your life, or the impact such a person might make.
- How willing are you to share your weaknesses, mistakes, and blemishes with others? Are you growing and developing through the *Samuel* version of your story, or are you protecting it by pointing fingers at others? Explain.

## Week 5

Read Chapter 1.5: What...Is Your Quest?

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week’s reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week’s reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?

- On the diagram depicting the seven parts of the Overall story, if moving up on the y-axis means that life is good, how would you label it? What does it mean for life to go well or not to go well? Why do you get up in the morning? Why do you work so hard? Why do you want next year to be better than this year?
- How easy is it for you to discern the patterns in life? Explain.
- Describe a quest in your life that was of utmost importance but now seems meaningless. Would your future self consider some of your current quests as a chasing after the wind? What do you seek in life? What shapes your decisions? What determines good days from not-so-good days?

## Week 6

Read the Part II Intro and Chapter 2.1: Division.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- How did your parents' approach to your relationship with them change when you reached adolescence?
- Describe a time when you were displaced and had to reestablish patterns of life away from home. What were the circumstances and emotions associated with this experience?
- How have you seen division within a group cause the demise of that group or cause it to struggle?

## Week 7

Read Chapter 2.2: Warning.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- As a teenager, what helpful guidance was given to you as you explored the new freedoms of adolescence? If you have or had teenagers, what helpful guidance did you give them?
- Share about a time or a situation when you "played close to the edge" and stumbled. What was the end result? What did you learn from the experience?
- Describe a time in your life when you stumbled and God offered love and grace.

## Week 8

Read Chapter 2.3: Consequence.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?



- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- How does it make you feel to think about God as the protagonist in the grand story of life? Did you ever experience significant consequences as a teenager? Were you ever kicked out? Were you ever grounded and missed a critical event? Did you ever spend time in a holding cell or juvie? Describe the situation.
- How faithful were your parents at providing loving discipline to you and allowing you to experience the consequences of your actions? How about with your own children (if applicable)? Explain.
- How have you seen God provide comfort and Jesus give grace, but a person still experience the consequences of his or her poor choices?

## Week 9

Read Chapter 2.4: Restoration.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- In what areas of your life do you (or did you) need restoration from God? What might that (or did that) look like?
- In what other ways do you see the Old Testament demonstrating that full restoration for God's people did not take place?
- In what areas of your life do you (or did you) need restoration from God? What might that (or did that) look like?

## Week 10

Read the Part III Intro and Chapter 3.1: Decision Stage.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- Describe a wonderful moment in life when you sat back with your hands behind your head and sighed, "Ahh, this is what it's all about." What do those moments have to do with Jesus?
- Which Gospel do you most enjoy reading, and why?
- If you have already made an initial life-changing decision about Jesus, describe the circumstances. Upon what did you base your decision?

# Week 11

Read Chapter 3.2: Discovery Stage.

## Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- If you could spend a day with Jesus, what "burning question" would you ask him? If you could spend an extended period of time with him, what do you think you might learn about what he said, what he laughed at, and even how he responded to the servers at a restaurant?
- How has Jesus shown you the destructive power of pride and asked you to humble yourself and break free from it? If life has not yet forced you to be humble, are you willing to choose humility for yourself? Explain.
- How has God demonstrated radical generosity and graciousness to you?

# Week 12

Read Chapter 3.3: Conflict Stage.

## Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- Are you currently honest about your relationship with him? Do you believe you're allowed to be honest? Has Jesus ever made a promise he didn't seem to keep? Did he promise to be there, but wasn't? Did he promise to provide what you prayed for, but didn't? Have you been honest with him? Explain.
- How have (or would you) respond to others (either believers or non-believers) who struggle with Jesus' claim of exclusivity?
- How have you experienced (or seen) Jesus rushing to those who don't know him but resting with those who *do* know him?

# Week 13

Read Chapter 3.4: Growth Stage.

## Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?

- As you anticipate completing this book, what do you feel it might be like to see the framework of the Overall Christian story so that it can shape how you live your life? Is it possible to have an active relationship with Jesus of Nazareth? Could that relationship make a positive impact on your life and your relationships? Explain.
- Which concept of the change Christ has made (or could make) in you resonates most with you? Being fully found? Receiving full, not partial, sight? Enjoying fullness of life? Moving from darkness to light, from grief to joy, or from slave to free? Something else? Complete this sentence: "I no longer need \_\_\_\_ because I now have \_\_\_\_."
- In response to Jesus' call, what might it look like for you to let go of your *self*? to let go of your *life*? to let go of the *world*?

## Week 14

Read the Part IV Intro and Chapter 4.1: In Jerusalem.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- How have you been touched by another person's story rather than by the answers that he or she might have had? Why did you find greater value in what that person had witnessed—what he or she had seen and heard?
- Why is the Holy Spirit an absolutely necessary element in the lives of God's children?
- How can you focus on sharing your story with others rather than providing "answers"?

## Week 15

Read Chapter 4.2: In All Judea and Samaria.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- When have you been absolutely convinced that you were right about something, only to learn otherwise? How did you respond?
- What do we learn from Paul's response when he realized he was wrong about Jesus?
- What practical steps can followers of Christ take to pursue unity with one another and embrace ways that God might be "expanding the story"?

# Week 16

Read Chapter 4.3: To the Ends of the Earth.

## Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- If you're a Christian, are you prepared to tell the story? Can you explain the foundation of your faith beyond "I've always gone to church," or "I believe because it's what my parents taught me"? Can you articulate your faith beyond a bumper-sticker message?
- In our own culture and circumstances, how might we do as Paul did to help others look at the grand story of God and how it blends with their existing myths, legends, and beliefs, providing answers that their way of thinking cannot provide?
- In what ways do you feel the way of the cross—including its weakness, brokenness, and shame—looks foolish to the world? How has Jesus provided the world with a new way of thinking through his life and his death?

# Week 17

Read Chapter 4.4: Rome.

## Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- In what ways have you learned or seen that contentment is about perspective and has little to do with our circumstances?
- How can you shift your spiritual focus from self (dating whomever you want, buying whatever you want, and living wherever you want if you tap into Christ's strength in you) to being part of the revolution—finding contentment by loving others as Christ modeled.
- What are (or should be) the implications of the fact that Jesus came to start a revolution and did not come here to be nice?

# Week 18

Read the Part V Intro and Chapter 5.1 Theology (AD 50–400).

## Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?

- Without identifying specific people, how have you seen the church filled with heroes and beautiful moments that we can be proud of? How have you seen brokenness and villainous moments in the church that followers of Jesus should be ashamed of?
- How would you attempt to explain the Trinity to someone who is struggling to understand how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three yet one?
- How do you understand—and how would you explain—the difference between theology and the Word of God? What are the role and importance of theology?

## Week 19

Read Chapter 5.2: Darkness (AD 400–1500).

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- Is it important that Christians "possess" Jerusalem? Is it important that church facilities always be used for the worship of God and never, for example, be sold to a Muslim or Hindu group? Explain.
- How does understanding that Muslims believe in a different Overall story that shapes how they live their lives help you better understand them? How might it influence the way you would speak to Muslims about matters of faith?
- Honestly answer the author's question for yourself. If you grew up across the street from a Muslim mosque, would you be Muslim? Why or why not?

## Week 20

Read Chapter 5.3: Reformation (AD 1500–1600).

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- In the church as well as in the secular world, how have you seen proof that "everything rises and falls on leadership"?
- Is the church supposed to have bigger-than-life, superstar leaders who are profoundly talented and influential? Or is this too much weight and pressure for human beings to handle? Should the church focus more on shared leadership and dialogue rather than one overall leader? Should the church embrace messy authenticity more than high quality and savvy strategy? Is traditional leadership the most powerful and effective approach so long as the leader is healthy, accountable to others, and surrendered to Christ? Explain.

- How have you seen issues such as infant baptism, free will, church governance, women in ministry, gifts of the Holy Spirit, and styles of worship divide the church? How might understanding that opposing groups all point to scriptural evidence to support their views impact the way you view such people or dialogue with them?

## Week 21

Read Chapter 5.4: Science (AD 1600–1900).

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- Describe how you have engaged (or would engage) in conversation with someone who feels that science explains all the mysteries of life and there is no longer a need for God.
- Describe how you have engaged (or would engage) with someone who looks at the admittedly imperfect church story and concludes that the world would be a better place without followers of Jesus.
- Do you tend to feel that science nullifies faith, focuses faith, or fuels faith? Why?

## Week 22

Read Chapter 5.5: Consumerism (AD 1900–Today).

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- After two thousand years, how is the church doing at lamb-feeding? Is this what Jesus had in mind when he said to take care of his flock? What is the status of the church? Explain.
- Describe some creative efforts of the church that have blessed you greatly, either as a participant or a recipient. What made these experiences so powerful and effective?
- Is there a difference between church being "fun" and "appealing"? Explain. How can we make sure that church is always "challenging"?

## Week 23

Read the Part VI Intro and Chapter 6.1: Final Episode.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?

- At this point in your life, do you have a destination, a plan, a place you're intending to go? Or are you wandering from day to day, relationship to relationship, job to job, hobby to hobby? Explain.
- If you had to write your own eulogy, what would it say? What would you want others to say about you? How would you need to live in order to be able to say you had "won the prize" at the end of your life?
- How can you imagine a final episode of your life that is attainable and yet audacious? What might that look like for you?

## Week 24

Read Chapter 6.2: Previous Episodes.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- Describe a time when you unexpectedly exploded with anger at someone, or felt compelled to do something to yourself you knew was not healthy either physically or emotionally, or suddenly shut down beyond your control. Looking back, what was the "story behind the stuff?"
- How have you seen retaining unplowed ground in life have a negative effect on a person's relationships (including with God) and on future episodes of that person's life?
- Identify the delta moments in your life as the author suggests—points where something significant changed in your mind, your heart, or your soul. As a result of these moments, how did you think differently about God, others, and/or yourself? What are the control factors that have resulted? How might you root these out of your life?

## Week 25

Read Chapter 6.3: Current Episode.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- Looking back on your previous life episodes, how would you rewrite them from God's perspective? How would God describe the circumstances of your delta moments? How would God describe the control factors you tend to wrestle with? What do you imagine God was thinking, planning, and doing during your previous episodes?
- How have you come face-to-face with the active during the *rebuilding* seasons or difficult episodes of your life?
- In what practical ways can you occasionally pause in life to give God a mid-ride hug and express your thanks for his presence, then hop back on your bike and continue to enjoy the ride?

# Week 26

Read Chapter 6.4: Next Episode.

## Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- How can you be more intentional about your thoughts and choices in the "prep" phase of the temptations you face rather than "in the moment" or at the point of response?
- How should understanding church as the place we train on Sunday mornings so we can run the race during the week—instead of as the place we run the race after we have trained during the week—change our approach to church?
- Looking back, how can you see evidence in your life of the enemy scheming to sabotage your relationship with God?

# Week 27

Read the Part VII Intro and Chapter 7.1: Worthy is the Lamb.

## Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- How can we find a "provocative and relevant spot" in our study of the Book of Revelation between an obsession with "cracking the code" and avoiding this part of the story altogether?
- As the second of three main characters in this cosmic story, how do you think we humans are doing? Are we getting any better? Are we becoming more like Jesus or drifting further away? When you look at the leaders of nations, the global economy, the reality and threat of war, the sex trade, the distribution of wealth, and the death of children in impoverished countries, how do you think we're doing? Explain.
- How does knowing that the end result of life's cosmic battle has been decided but the fighting is not yet over affect your perspective on the suffering you experience in this life?

# Week 28

Read Chapter 7.2: Book of Life.

## Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week's reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?



- Why is acknowledging Jesus as the one who is worthy and being prepared for his return of vast more importance than understanding how or whether the “rapture,” the “tribulation,” or the “millennium” will occur?
- How does the idea that a relationship with Jesus should move us beyond the “absence of bad” to the “presence of good” affect you? Why?
- Why would anyone respond to the assertion that God will judge us someday by saying, “Maybe—hopefully—I guess we’ll just have to see”?

## Week 29

Read Chapter 7.3: New Heaven and Earth.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week’s reading? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What questions did this week’s reading raise for you? How did it challenge your current understanding of the Overall Christian story?
- What clues does the description of the garden of Eden in Genesis 1–3 give us about the “new heaven and earth” we can expect someday?
- What “glimpses of glory” or “hints of heaven” have you seen in this life that make you excited for heaven?
- What things in life do you need to do before Jesus walks through your front door and says “Time’s up”? What broken relationships need mending? Whom do you need to reach out to, care for, or forgive? What deep desire has God placed in you that you have not yet pursued? What assignment from God has been sitting on your desk for years? What do you need to build, create, write, or start?

## Week 30

Read the Epilogue.

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your biggest overall takeaway from your reading and discussion of *Overall*? How did it help you frame the Overall Christian story?
- What lingering questions remain for you about the Overall Christian story?
- How do you respond to the author’s statement, “Parts of God and his story are not to be figured out; they are simply to be enjoyed”? Why?
- How might your reading and discussion of *Overall* help you identify ideas and thoughts that do not fit with God’s grand story? Give some examples of such ideas and thoughts.
- What is your path forward after reading and discussing *Overall*? How might you “put up the drywall, paint the rooms, add furniture, and hang pictures to make the epic narrative your own”?